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ABSTRACT

A list of behavioral objectives to be achieved by the Kalamazoo school system was drawn up for the period 1973-74. Items in the list were designed to show the top priority directions for the school system and to serve as accountability criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the present administration. Accountability is conceived in terms of the need to provide school patrons with comprehensive feedback regarding the educational return for their tax dollars, to ascertain student performance levels in all areas, to differentiate between levels of productivity of personnel throughout the system, and to use fiscal responsibility as an important criterion in all decisionmaking. The objectives address themselves particularly to data collection and analysis, management by objectives, student learning, modification of staffing patterns, and other areas. (Author/WM)

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KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent

September 7, 1973

1973-74 PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

FOR KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This communication presents the specific performance objectives for the Kalamazoo Public Schools for the 1973-74 school year. These objectives are related closely to those presented in the July 10, 1972 document entitled *1972-73 Performance Objectives for Kalamazoo Public Schools*. Although there are some changes between 1973-74 and 1972-73 performance objectives, the major thrust is the same because of the obvious reason that many of those objectives viewed to be important one year ago have not been completely achieved and remain as important school system priorities. The format for the 1973-74 objectives is similar to that of the 1972-73 document which is attached for ease of reference.

The primary change in format reflects our increased emphasis on the implementation of comprehensive accountability models which permeate our entire system and which provide direction for our various programs and practices. Our concept of accountability is one wherein school patrons are given comprehensive feedback regarding the educational return for their tax dollar, student performance levels in all areas are ascertained, differentiation is made between levels of productivity of personnel throughout the system, and fiscal responsibility is an important criterion in all decision making.

I. Data Collection and Analysis

A necessary component of any meaningful accountability scheme must provide for the collection and analysis of relevant data. The Department of Research and Development has been developed for this purpose. A basic function of this department is to select appropriate data gathering instruments, direct the administration of these instruments, and automate where appropriate data storage and analysis. These efforts should allow us to:

A. Improve Curriculum

Curriculum is viewed as an organizational pattern for structuring learning. It is the preplanned dimensions of the instructional program. Through data collection and analysis, which include relevant research and feedback from our professional staff, parents and students, continuous efforts toward improving the curriculum will be carried out. The improvements will be on both individual building and system-wide bases.

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B. Increase Evaluation

Considerable progress toward this goal was made last year. However, we must expand our evaluation efforts and effectuate them on a regular basis each year. It is important to measure the outcomes of all programs, practices and personnel. The purpose of such evaluation is to identify strengths and weaknesses so that we may make appropriate changes in a continuous effort to improve the quality of education provided by this school system.

C. Compile Unit Records

To facilitate the evaluation process we are compiling unit records amenable to data processing for all students and school personnel. Most work in this regard initially will be devoted to students, teachers, and administrators.

1. Student Unit Records

The purpose of these data will be to provide teachers with feedback regarding student performance levels early in the fall and later in the spring so that there will be an accurate record of student growth with respect to the several objectives of our schools. Unit records for students will include various measures of student growth in both cognitive and affective areas as well as other relevant personal characteristics such as: age, grade, sex, race, birthday, student identification numbers, census tract and block for all students, record of last year's grades, student's building and home room.

2. Teacher Unit Records

The purpose of these data is to generate teacher performance profiles which can be used as feedback to help teachers do a more effective job. These data also will be used in the annual principal's evaluation of teachers. The unit record will include measures of student achievement, student opinions, parent opinions, administrator ratings, and peer ratings, as well as relevant personal characteristics such as: years of teaching experience, education including their degree program, majors and minors, areas of teaching compared with areas of training, age, race and sex.

3. Administrator Unit Records

The purpose of these data will be to generate administrator performance profiles which can be used as feedback for improving administrator effectiveness. Also, the data will be used as evaluative criteria in a new administrator accountability salary scheme. Unit records for administrators will vary somewhat depending on the administrative position. In general the data will include measures of the extent to which

an administrator meets his performance objectives which in turn are evaluated in both qualitative and quantitative terms, student achievement where appropriate, student opinions, teacher ratings, peer ratings, parent ratings, ratings of superordinates, and relevant personal characteristics such as: years of experience, education including their degree program majors and minors, age, race and sex.

II. Management by Objectives

We believe that all employees in the system should have specific objectives which they are working toward. Therefore, personnel within the system will use management by objectives models reflecting those objectives presented here as well as their own.

A. Administrators

All administrators will have submitted to the Superintendent's office no later than October 15, 1973, the specific performance objectives which they plan to achieve throughout the coming year. Some of these objectives will be related to the system-wide objectives of this administration while others will reflect personal interests of the individual responding. In all cases, personnel in the Superintendent's office will review these objectives, discuss them with the appropriate administrator and make necessary changes so that the final list of objectives for which an administrator will be held accountable throughout the year is mutually acceptable both to personnel in the Superintendent's office and to the particular administrator. This management by objectives model will provide direction for specific administrators, it will help personnel in the central office assess commitments related to system-wide objectives, and it will serve as an important tool for evaluating performance. Of course, there will be much variability between lists of objectives depending on the administrative position involved. As an example the objectives of a lower elementary school principal will be quite different from those of the Business Manager.

B. Teachers

There appears to be a significant gap between the experiences many teachers had at their teacher preparation institutions and the skills required to function in the classrooms of this community. We will attempt to bridge this gap through extensive personnel skills development.

1. Teaching for Objectives

We are moving toward generalized teaching models analogous to the management by objectives model for administrators. Both parents and students have a right to have some idea of what one might expect to learn in a particular course or classroom situation. It is the teacher's obligation to make

this information available by means of listing specific objectives for a course or learning unit. We will devote considerable energy during the coming year to working with teachers to achieve this objective.

2. Utilization of Available Data

As discussed above we have extensive data in our student unit record files. However, all of these data are of little value unless they find their way back into the classroom in such a manner as to serve as feedback for helping teachers do a more effective job. Much of the efforts of personnel in the Departments of Instruction, Student Services and Research and Development will be devoted toward channeling available data on student performance back into the classroom. Early in the fall teachers will be made aware of the academic growth of students in their classroom during the previous year as well as reactions of students to their classroom environment. This feedback will be presented on an individual basis and will serve as a "springboard" for improving teacher effectiveness.

III. Student Learning

Our concept of accountability is one wherein we view ourselves basically as an academic institution. We are taking seriously our responsibility to help all students in this school system to develop the basic skills and the basic understandings necessary to compete in this society for jobs and for higher education.

A. Academic Achievement

The fundamental component of student learning receiving most attention is academic achievement. If students are to grow to their fullest capacity they must have the basic academic skills requisite for that growth. It is the intent of this administration to coordinate and influence the efforts of school personnel such that academic achievement will be significantly increased. Although much progress was made toward this objective last year, in that average academic achievement equaled or exceeded one month's growth for each month in school at all grade levels except grade 9, we remain as a school system below national norms at most grade levels. This area represents our single highest order priority and one in which we must continue to improve. Four departments under the division of Instructional Management are vital to our success in this area.

1. Elementary Instruction

This department with its cadre of instructional specialists is the critical link between our increased emphasis on academic achievement at the Board level and appropriate changes in teacher performance. Personnel in this department will work

with teachers and administrators on an individual basis to provide the necessary supportive services.

2. Secondary Instruction

Personnel in this department including instructional specialists, academic specialists, and department heads have essentially the same responsibility at the secondary level as those outlined above for the Department of Elementary Instruction.

3. Student Services

The existence of this department is based on a recognition of the important role which home environment and individual student attitudes play with respect to student learning. Where the two instructional departments are working to maximize learning through the formal education process the Department of Student Services is designed to improve student learning by approaching the problem from a slightly different perspective. By working directly with the student and the home, personnel in this department are concerned with the prevention, reduction and elimination of student adjustment problems especially as they affect learning.

4. Research and Development

The role of the Department of Research and Development is outlined above under those topics related to the development of unit record systems and personnel skills development.

B. Attitudes

In a recent survey of parents of children in the Kalamazoo Public Schools it was determined that in addition to placing high value on the importance of academic achievement as a basic school system objective, parents also indicated that schools should teach young people to develop self-respect, explore areas of self-interest, and be good citizens. Attitudinal growth will continue as an objective of this school system. This objective should not be viewed as in conflict with our emphasis on academic achievement. On the contrary we believe that success in academic achievement will result in more positive student attitudes.

C. Areas Related to Student Learning

Several areas in which we will continue to devote much energy during the coming year have increased student learning as the ultimate goal.

1. Individualization

It is important that students at all ability levels are challenged to their full potential. We believe this can be

achieved by allowing students to progress at their own rate and by challenging them to do so. Individualization will be encouraged and expanded as a worthy goal throughout the system.

2. Violence and Student Unrest

Every child has a right to attend school without threat to safety or fear of physical violence. Data indicate that the school system made significant progress in this area last year. We will continue to work with students such that the type of self-defeating behaviors contributing to violence and unrest may be eliminated. Part of our efforts in this area will include the development of experimental alternatives to our present system of suspension.

3. Drug Problem

We will continue our efforts to reduce the use of drugs by our students through appropriate educational and rehabilitation programs and by working with community and law enforcement agencies.

4. Career Education

In an effort to make daily learning activities more relevant we will continue to help young people throughout the system become more aware of career opportunities. This effort will be directed toward elementary youngsters as well as secondary.

5. Discrimination

Discrimination for any reason can have a devastating effect on student learning. We are committed to the total elimination of discrimination based on race, creed or sex. Furthermore, we will work toward the elimination of the stereotyping of roles or people based on any of these characteristics. We are requiring administrators throughout the system to include as a part of their performance objectives an indication of the specific activities under their supervision designed to eliminate the type of discrimination addressed here.

6. Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent input is a critical factor in student learning. Also, our extensive data on student performance in some cases may not be amenable to a brief reporting on a mailed report card. To get the best results from available data on student growth we are attempting to get teachers to share this information on a one to one basis with parents to a larger degree than last year.

7. Pre-School Program

The developmental period between 10 months and four years may be the most critical learning time in a child's life. In an

effort to improve long term learning we implemented a home based pre-school program last year which had some success. This program will be continued with a primary emphasis on very young children in underprivileged homes. The program is designed to improve parental awareness and involvement with respect to the learning and developmental needs of infants.

8. Alternative Education Models

A significant number of students in each school in our system do not respond at maximum efficiency to the educational programs of the school which they attend. Given the latitude by the courts with respect to the case pending, Michelle Oliver, et al vs. the Kalamazoo Board of Education, et al, we will experiment with alternative educational programs.

IV. Modification of Staffing Patterns

Last year we implemented a new organizational scheme to develop a more efficient management system. For 1973-74 we will modify this structure a little more by:

A. Developing more efficient central office administrative structure

The reorganization of central office staff last year resulted in eight fewer administrative positions with a net savings to the school system in excess of $100,000. Additional changes this year will result in a reduction of five more positions with a net savings in excess of an additional $80,000.

B. Clarifying roles and relationships of personnel throughout the system

Considerable progress has been made toward achieving this objective, although we will continue to improve in this area by recognizing the importance of channels of communication and lines of authority in the overall effectiveness of our organization.

C. Improving operation of building autonomy

There is a fine line between autonomy for building principals and building level leadership which operates within the framework of the general performance objectives of the Superintendent's Office and the policies of the Board of Education. We had examples last year where certain principals practiced too much autonomy while others accepted too little if any responsibility for building leadership. For 1973-74 we will work toward this objective so that a "happy marriage" of building autonomy and implementation of system-wide objectives is practiced on an individual basis at each building.

D. Increasing instructional leadership role for teachers

The first step toward achieving this objective was the broad use of instructional specialists, academic specialists and department heads

during 1972-73. We are increasing the number of instructional specialists with the use of categorical aids while making critical examination of the contributions of these particular staffing patterns.

V. Other Areas

A. Use of the Community Education Center

We will convert our maintenance operation to a portion of the Community Education Center. The center will be expanded to serve as a Community Education Center facility to the extent possible with available revenues. Appropriate administrators in the system will work with the Advisory Committee on the Use of School Facilities in determining future programs.

B. Building and Site Improvements

Extensive improvements will be made this year at facilities throughout the system with respect to asphalting of play areas and parking lots, electrical work, acoustical tiling, window repair, painting, building improvements, and new construction.

C. Storage

At the present time our storage operation is too inefficient. It is scattered throughout the city, and we are storing many items which should be sold or discarded. Efficiency of the storage operation will be improved by centralizing and converting to school facilities where appropriate.

D. Accounting Procedures

During the past year we moved toward a Programmed Budgeting Accounting System utilizing electronic data processing based on the IBM EPIC program. We will continue to convert our accounting procedures to this system which should provide a clearer picture of building and program costs while enabling us better to perform business functions on schedule.

E. Administrator Salary Scheme

We will implement this year an administrator accountability salary scheme wherein administrator salary adjustments are based on performance.

F. Millage

It will be necessary for our Board of Education to go to the taxpayers this spring with a sizable millage request. Specific objectives of this administration are to recommend to the Board of Education an appropriate millage levy and then to coordinate a millage campaign such that the millage request is given approval by the voters.

G. Collective Bargaining

We now have ten separate collective bargaining units in the school system. It is an understatement to indicate that each of these units is becoming more demanding in terms of insistance on increased wages and benefits. An objective of this administration is to facilitate the collective bargaining process in a manner which best represents the interests of our school patrons.

H. Involvement of Students, Parents and Other School Patrons

We believe in the importance of meaningful involvement of students, parents and school patrons in the operation of the school system. We will continue to obtain extensive input from all of these groups to assist us in making decisions. Recognizing that relevant feedback must be based on accurate information we also will improve our communications process with respect to these groups.

I. Climate of the Kalamazoo Community

Some citizens feel that this community is now experiencing some problems related to general climate and image. The school system did not create all of these problems and cannot be expected to solve them by itself. However, we think the school system, working with the broader community, can and should make an important contribution. In that sense we hope to have a positive effect on the overall climate of this community. Primary areas of concern which are measurable include property values, movement of family units in and out of school district, and attitudes of school patrons. This objective was listed last year and continues to be a high priority long term objective of this administration.

Of course many educational leaders throughout the school system have specific objectives of their own. We will make every effort to encourage this kind of initiative on the part of our staff and to work with them in the achievement of such objectives.

Finally, we welcome written feedback from all members of the community to this list of objectives as well as suggestions for additional concerns. We will make every effort to incorporate such feedback into our overall planning as we make appropriate changes to this document.